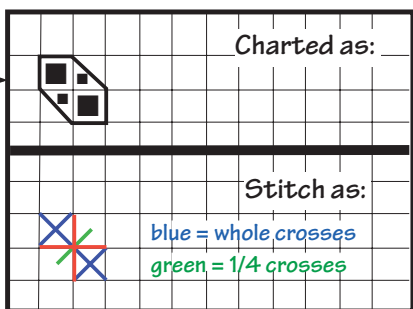


Many stitchers have asked how I get the black kats on our Kats by Kelly™ designs to appear so “black” with little or no white fabric showing through the black stitches. Well, it all has to do with technique and I am going to share mine with you. These techniques may seem a little unorthodox according to more traditional methods, but they work for me (on all my stitching, not just the Kats by Kelly™ series) and maybe they will work for you, too!

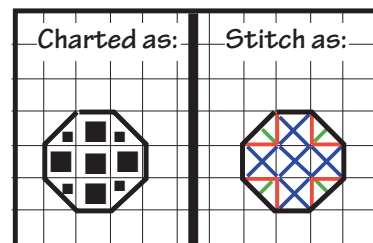
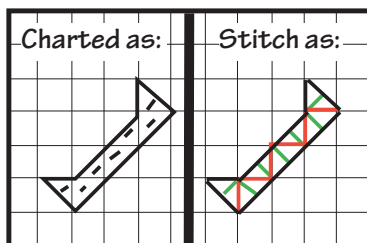


I prefer to see as little fabric showing through the stitches on my finished pieces as possible—I want total coverage, especially on the black cats.

(See diagram below left) Stitch the two whole crosses (blue lines) and the two 1/4 stitches (green lines) as charted. Then make two stitches on either side of each 1/4 stitch so that no fabric shows through to the front (red lines). Then complete the backstitching, if appropriate. Anywhere 1/4 stitches are used, this same principle can be applied. **THIS TECHNIQUE CAN MAKE A GREAT DIFFERENCE IN YOUR COVERAGE!!**



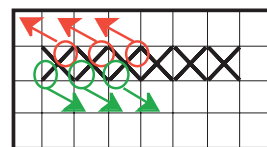
Other examples: Stitch all full crosses (blue lines) and 1/4 stitches first (green lines), then fill in with more stitches in the same color and same number of strands (red lines). Finish with backstitching (black lines).



It is perfectly acceptable to go back later and fill in places where the fabric shows through as long as you don't catch in any of the backstitching. It works much better with black thread, though, than with any other color. Black absorbs light so you are less able to see the individual stitches.



After completing each row, use a sharp needle to manipulate the underneath stitches for better coverage, if needed—during stitching they get pulled up a bit. I keep a sharp needle nearby and after each row, I go back and manipulate each stitch in that row so that as little fabric is showing through as possible. Then I stitch the next row and repeat the manipulation process. The top part of the underneath stitch can be pulled up slightly (red) and the bottom pulled down (green). See diagram right. This should be done gently so as not to damage the fibers. Also, ending threads on the back by running them through existing stitches can cause the threads on the front to move, so always remanipulate the front fibers after each time you end your thread.



THIS TECHNIQUE CAN ALSO MAKE A GREAT DIFFERENCE IN THE APPEARANCE OF YOUR FINISHED WORK!!



Stitching partial stitches when the backstitching spans more than two squares is illustrated below. After all the cross stitches and backstitches are completed, again, go back and manipulate the fibers for better coverage and/or fill in with additional stitches being careful not to catch in the backstitches. A sharp needle definitely makes it much easier to stitch these partial stitches.

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